

STAT

Evidence Said to Put Mao's Faction in Minority

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There is increasing evidence that the hard-line faction of Chairman Mao Tse-tung is in the minority at the upper levels of the Chinese Communist party, some specialists on China have reported.

They regard that as the most likely explanation for the duration and intensity of the power struggle in Peking. The Mao faction, spearheaded in public by militant young Red Guards, has repeatedly denounced its opponents without removing them from power.

Other analysts of Chinese affairs, unwilling to believe that Mr. Mao is in the minority, agree that he and Defense Minister Lin Biao, his heir apparent, have been unable lately to muster a dependable majority in the party hierarchy against their well-entrenched opposition.

According to that line of reasoning, the Mao-Lin faction still controls the party press and, with its apparent approval, the army has remained neutral in the political infighting that has plagued Peking this fall. But the Red Guard movement and the intelligentsia are believed to be as riddled with factionalism as the party itself.

Recent Signs Studied

Government analysts have been interested by several recent indications of weakness in the Mao faction.

In a speech at a Red Guard rally in Peking Nov. 28, Mr. Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, tried to dismiss the question of majority and minority factions in the party as unimportant. The gist of her speech, later broadcast by Peking, was that

Some Washington Specialists Believe Hard-Liners Are Outnumbered in Peking

It was "more important to be ideologically right than to be in the majority," a one specialist put it. For her to make such an argument, several specialists contend, was tantamount to an admission that the Mao group finds itself in the minority and is seeking to use the leverage of ideological purity to retain its influence on wavering followers.

The public comments of Miss Chiang—she uses her maiden name—are regarded as an indication that the Mao faction is highly sensitive about this question. The reason, analysts suggest, may lie not only in domestic criticism but also in the charge by the Soviet Communist party that the Chinese party has forfeited its legitimacy by departing from the proper Marxist-Leninist line.

Meeting Significant

Miss Chiang's speech was also interpreted as a reply to real or anticipated criticism of the regime's handling of the Central Committee meeting in August, called to approve the manifesto of the so-called cultural revolution.

The Mao-Lin faction had the Central Committee meet in the presence of "representatives of revolutionary teachers and students from institutes of higher learning in Peking."

Political analysts here regard that as evidence that the Mao faction feared a direct challenge from long-time party officials in the Central Committee and moved to silence them by having Red Guards—the

Since that meeting, analysts have found several oblique admissions of weakness by the Mao-Lin faction in Hung Chi, the Chinese party's ideological journal. It is edited by Chen Po-ta, who is in charge of the cultural revolution.

On Dec. 12, Hung Chi acknowledged for the first time that "armed clashes" had broken out between rival factions of the Red Guard and that Red Guards, as well as party members, had been "duped" into opposing the regime by "the handful of persons in power with in the party who take the capitalist road."

Allusion to Leaders

That was considered an allusion to the firmly entrenched opposition to the Mao-Lin faction in many of the provincial leadership groups and to the often-criticized party leaders, Liu Shao-chi, the chief of state, and Teng Hsiao-ping, the party secretary-general.

In another editorial, Hung Chi divided the Communist party cadres into these groups:

Those who put forward the wrong line. "There are no more than one or two, or just a few, of these," the editorial said.

Those who have put into effect the wrong line consciously. "These are a minority," Hung Chi said.

Those who have put such a line into effect without knowing any better. "There is a great number of these," the journal acknowledged.

Those who follow the proper Maoist line.

The inference made by some but not all analysts here is that the first three groups constitute a majority. Otherwise, they say, Hung Chi would have put all three in the minority.